September 16, 2013

Commission's Secretary
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
9300 East Hampton Drive
Capitol Heights, MD 20743

To Whom It May Concern:

E-rate has been instrumental in ensuring the schools in Pickens County have the necessary connectivity to provide students opportunities to interact in a digital world. E-rate has provided our district with opportunities far beyond our financial restraints. Pickens County is and continues to be a distressed area. Approximately 83% of our students participate in the free and reduced lunch program. The local revenue generated from the county has decreased significantly over the years and the state no longer provides technology funds for updates and necessary upgrades. Therefore, our current infrastructure is no longer adequate to support the number of technological devices that are used throughout the district. Since we have not been able to keep up with vast changes in the digital world, our economically disadvantaged students are falling behind their peers who do not face the same economic drawbacks.

Pickens County has identified the following needs listed below and is requesting funding from E-rate:

- Upgrade current bandwidth: We run a 100mb between 7 schools, central office and Head Start that does not allow for wireless activity. Wireless access points will allow students to meet instructional goals through a variety of resources such as the use of personal cell phones, ipads, ipods, laptops, or any other wireless learning tool that can be used to enhance the learning experience.
- Employ additional personnel: We have a technology coordinator and a technology assistance that attempt to service over 3,000 computers (laptops, net books, desktops), 300 wireless devices (ipads and minis), over 1,500 classroom printers. In addition, maintenance is provided for audio/visual equipment.
- Acquire additional funding: Approximately $800,000 is needed to upgrade the current infrastructure, maintain the equipment already purchased and provide wireless access points at all of our schools.

Pickens County will be able to modernize its current networking infrastructure to meet the challenging curricular needs of our students if we receive additional funding through E-rate. We would love to meet and discuss our identified needs with you. If you require additional information, please contact us.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Chapman, Superintendent